

STONE WALLS

FALL 1978

\$1.60



Early on a chilly, rainy morning when Sam was walking me, I kept thinking about all the people getting up in all our hill towns — all the people to whom attention should be paid.

The town officers who serve their terms with little thanks and much blame; the men who keep the roads in good shape and run the snow plows through the stormy nights; the teachers who help to determine the attitudes and resources of countless children; and the people who keep our valuable little libraries going. Then there are all the people doing their jobs all the days, winter or summer; and the parents bringing up their children with worry and with love. The postmasters (how often we just take the mail service for granted and complain), the storekeepers, the often-forgotten farmers, the mechanics, (how could we live without them?). Consider the doctors who minister to our health, and the preachers who try to keep our souls intact.

Stone Walls pays tribute to all of these, to all of you, our readers.



STONE WALLS

Box 85

Huntington, Massachusetts 01050

Vol. 4, No. 3

STONE WALLS is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$6.00 a year, \$1.60 for individual copies. Please add 40¢ with a special request for any back issue to be mailed. The retail price of individual copies may be modified only with the permission of the Editorial Board. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts and illustrations from and about the hilltowns of the Berkshires. The editors of STONE WALLS assume no responsibility for non-commissioned manuscripts, photographs, drawings, or other material. No such material will be returned unless submitted with self addressed envelope and sufficient postage. We also welcome letters from our readers. No portions of this publication may be reproduced in any form, with the exception of brief excerpts for review purposes, without the express consent of the editors of STONE WALLS.

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Cover photos by George McNeil

Printed by The Mint Printers, Laurie Drive, Southampton, Massachusetts 01073

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EDWARD K. LINCOLN

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Los Angeles, California provided the information on Edward K. Lincoln, also his photograph.

Blandford ...

Hollywood of the East

by Louise Mason

Yes, cowboys and Indians actually did roam the hills of Blandford at one time. It will surprise most "Hilltowners" to learn that back in the very early days of motion pictures, before and shortly after World War I, old westerns and melodramas were filmed right here in Blandford and vicinity. There are even rumors that part of Shirley Temple's "Littlest Rebel" was filmed here, also, later on. Where exactly is *here*? On the big farm close to East Otis, off Route 23 on Gibbs Road out beyond where the Templemans live, the old Lincoln or Peck Farm which has most recently been owned by the Sisters of Notre Dame and John Galanek.

This huge farm has had a varied and colorful history. Before the turn of the century a man by the name of Uhl, who was publisher of a German language newspaper in New York City and an outsider, bought up many parcels of land to form one large farm which at times has contained 2500 acres. In fact as the pictures show, it resembles a ranch of western range land, with extensive, fairly level fields, in an open and rather lonely location, where the weather can be terrible with cold, snow, and wind; but in the summer seems gentle and very beautiful with grand views to the east and Walnut Hill close by. In 1950, at a time when the entire property was for sale, a real estate advertisement went like this:

"2500± ACRE BEEF CATTLE FARM

With Beautiful 86 Acre Lake

And 17 Room Residence

"This splendid farm-estate high in the Berkshires — now supports 200 head of beef cattle, and has pasturage and facilities for a larger herd. 500 of the 2500 acres are in wire-enclosed pastureland, while 100 are fertile level tillable land excellent for extensive crop-raising as well as grain. Substantial modern barns and farm buildings are well-equipped."

"In the midst of a superb stand of towering spruce trees, and just a few hundred yards from the main residence, lies an 86 acre lake which affords good fishing, boating and swimming. There is abundant game for hunting. A little distance away is a smaller pond.

"Besides a well-appointed, comfortable main residence with ten master bedrooms and three smaller bedrooms, the farm provides ample additional living quarters. Among the buildings around a grass courtyard . . . is a 6 room caretaker's apartment. There is a 5 room apartment for help, and a near-by farmhouse consists of one 5 room and one 4 room apartment... Another farmhouse, . . . about a mile from the main group, might be sold as a separate dwelling.

"Because of its ideal location, within a short drive of the many cultural and recreational activities offered by the Berkshires, . . . the property affords exceptional opportunities for conversion or development as a resort. The residence could readily be made into an attractive inn, club, or ski-lodge. Equally good possibilities exist for conversion to a school, or rest home . . .

"The extensive acreage, lake, and road frontage suggest possibilities for development of a camp or cottage colony, or for subdivision, with the lake and acres of surrounding forest creating an almost made-to-order game preserve."

Mr. Uhl had three daughters, surname Singer, and he built a house for each of them on the property. People say it was Singer Sewing Machine money that built the farm, so we assume that his wife was a Singer and these were his step-daughters. One house beyond the main farmhouse was later known as the old Wilcox place, and another built at one end of Long Pond burned down long ago. As the above description shows, there were lots of barns and sheds, a farmhouse, and main house. Most of these buildings were built by Rand Gladdin, a master carpenter of the old school.

Two of the Singer girls just fade from the scene, but the third one, Ada Olive, married a Van Heusen, a member of the Van Heusen shirt family. Jim Templeman, who owns part of the original property and one of the farmhouses described above, says that Mr. Van Heusen was a legislator for the State of New York. Jim found some old books with Van Heusen's name in them, books about the legislature. Mr. Van Heusen and his wife raised show dogs up there in the summer, Chows. Nobody seems to know exactly what happened, but Van Heusen divorced his wife shortly after Edward K. Lincoln came to the farm to film movies in 1914. Lincoln then married Ada Olive Van Heusen, and there is a deed in which Van Heusen transferred the entire property to Ada Olive Lincoln in 1915. Presumably it was hers by inheritance. Jim Templeman thinks the Van Heusens invited Lincoln to use the location for movies.

Edward K. Lincoln is listed in the 1921 "Motion Picture Studio Directory" as follows:

"LINCOLN, E.K.: b. Johnstown, Pa.; stage career, stock 4 yrs.; also "The College Widow", "Strongheart", "Squaw Man", "The Virginians", "The Woman"; screen career, World, Goldwyn, Perret Productions ("For the Freedom of the World", "Lafayette,

We Come", "Stars of Glory"), Hodkinson ("Fighting Through", "Desert Gold"). S.L. Pictures ("Virtuous Men", "The Inner Voice"), A.J. Bimburg ("What is Love"), International ("The Woman God Changed"). Western, society and character roles. Height 6 ft., weight 185; black hair and hazel eyes. Owns modern motion picture studios at Grantwood, N.J. and Blandford, Mass. Address 110 W. 40th St., N.Y.C."

Do any of these film titles sound familiar? From the description of Lincoln it's not surprising that Mrs. Van Heusen fell for him. You will have to draw your own conclusions as to the details. Mrs. Harry Humason says Mrs. Lincoln was quite a bit older than her husband. The Lincolns eventually moved to Los Angeles, which became the center of the motion picture industry, but continued to use the farm summers and raise show dogs there until it was sold in 1940 to L.O. Peck, the lumberman. Harry Humason was farm manager for awhile, both for the Lincolns and for six or seven years after Mr. Peck bought the property as a summer home and investment. Mr. Peck cut timber and had more land cleared so that cattle could be raised, as many as 200 head at times. He made extensive improvements to the fields and buildings, and his family spent the summers in the main house. About 1963, Mr. Peck sold the farm to the Sisters of Notre Dame, who used it as a retreat. Three or four years ago the Sisters sold most of it to John Galanek, reserving some buildings and a 30 acre tract of land for their own use. Mr. Galanek had planned to develop the farm by building expensive homes in a subdivision, but so far has been unable to carry this out.

Now, let's go back to 1914 and hear first hand what went on up at the Lincoln Farm when they made the old movies. Ray Snow was born in 1893 in the house he now lives in on Route 23. Before he was



Corral and Barn

married in 1915 he worked on the Farm as handyman and filled in as an “extra” in some of the movies. Ray is now eighty-five and likes to recall these experiences. He says, “Yes, I was in movies up there, don’t look like it, does it. Well, I’ll tell you. When Mr. Van Heusen divorced his wife, that next spring Lincoln came up and started takin’ movin’ pictures. Mrs. Van Heusen — I think they had the Van Heusen shirt outfit and she was a Singer before she was married. Now she owned the whole farm; she owned everything. Mr. Lincoln, I don’t know where he come from; he was a stranger to us. He was single when he come up there. She bought him an Olds roadster.

“Now I worked on the farm, but every-day when it was pleasant and the sun shone and they could take pictures, I was out with them. They was Uncle Luke Besaw and Earl Hazard, I think his name was, and myself. This was before I was married and I was married in 1915, so you can see how far back it was. They made pictures up there all summer and the next spring I got through up there. My Uncle George Snow was boss farmer up there. In fact my half-brother, Billy Snow, was boss farmer for awhile. My

cousin, Harry Humason, Ida Hall’s brother, worked up there, too, and they used us sometimes in between as characters in the movies. In 1914 I got \$12 a week at the farm, and they give \$2 extra pay every day when we was makin’ pictures. That’s all we got, but we didn’t do anything but run around. There weren’t many local people worked up there; we was the only ones then.

“They had one young couple that had a trained horse, then there was Lincoln — he was the star —, and a young blonde actor. Mrs. Van Heusen was in it, too, when they was on moonshine pictures; she drank beer in the picture. They built a log cabin down there on Long Pond and put in a bar and everything, you know. They had burnt sugar for liquor, but they did have real beer because they had to have the froth on it. I never drank nothin’ but you know what I mean. Lincoln bought you Maine Bass boots to wear instead of cowboy boots. There was the man and his wife, real little people, and they had a real Indian pony, a trick horse. The man couldn’t have weighed over 110-115 pounds. He looked like Shoemaker on the race horse. The other horses they had up there was lovely horses, show horses with

cropped tails. They got real horse tails from New York and braided them in for the movies, and honest and truly if you didn't know it you would hardly notice it at all. At that time all they had up at the Farm was show horses, coach horses.

"Most of the films were Westerns. 'The Final Settlement' and the 'Golden Ladder' was two of the names of the pictures. I know one day I was a robber, see, and I was down in Chester jumping a freight, and as fast as they turned that damn crank the faster you're goin'. I was runnin' and jumpin' onto that freight car. Then we took some pictures down on the brook that's between Blandford and Chester, you know, where the old CCC camp was (Sanderson Brook in Chester State Forest). There's a brook down there a ways with a good big falls. They started after they got in there by the brook to fix a place to develop the films, but the water wasn't right so they couldn't develop them up there. They had to take the films somewhere else to develop them.

"They also took pictures down at the dam on Long Pond and they used a dummy

where the fella fell over, you know, and they used the same principle up on the brook. Anyway, Uncle Luke Besaw and I were supposed to be tanning hide. We had the Indian mocassin hide in the water, in the brook. Uncle Luke and I was standing in the water and this woman (a dummy) was comin' down the river, and we saw this red scarf. We picked it up and after we got down to the falls we looked down and there she lay (the actress) on the rocks down there. She had a red hat that matched the scarf. We goes down there, of course. They kept doin' it over and over, tryin' to get it right. Uncle Luke, he was a card. You couldn't get him excited and they wanted him excited, you know. So when they did take the last picture they had her powdered up so damn white, pardon my English, and they had dirt on her face where she got it scraped, you know. She was so limp he really did get excited a little. He said, 'God, Ray, I guess she is dead, ain't she.' She was so slim before, you know, when we would pick her up and take her out she didn't act like that light. But when that happened

These Buildings Form Court



it came out very good, and they was tickled with that. Uncle Luke, you just couldn't get him excited at all. It's hard for anyone that's in it when you know it's make believe. It spoiled it to go see a picture. I never did see any of the movies we made.

"One of the pictures they got down there on top of Tannery Hill (Blandford) at the Asa Culver house on Route 23. They paid the people to use the house for a couple of days. We were doin' pictures of a robbery, and they took the glass out of the windows and we were shootin' out the windows at the house across the road where Morrell lives now. We used corn-starch in the gun shells for powder so it looked like the real stuff. Well, while we were there, Sven Anderson's house on Shepard Road caught fire (Sven Anderson, Sr.). We see the smoke and that there's a fire down there, so they get us all in the car and went down and took pictures of that. After they got the pictures taken it looked cheap, you know, and Lincoln made out a check and handed it to Andersen and said, 'This will start you a little. I don't have much to give you.' They said it was a nice check. It was very nice of Lincoln. Oh, he was a nice guy. I liked Lincoln."

Mrs. Gladys Shepard of Blandford, daughter of Sven Anderson, Sr., says she was ten years old and at school on that September day in 1914 when her home burned to the ground. She remembers coming home to find the house and barn completely consumed. She says the fire started about noon in the hay loft. A spark from the house chimney blew in the hay loft door, and the resulting blaze spread to all the buildings including the house.

Ray Snow remembers that several sunset scenes were filmed out the other side of Pittsfield atop a mountain noted for lovely sunsets. The cameras had to be on top of the hill just as the sun was going

down at just the right moment. They made three trips to get it just right. Of his experiences as a movie actor he says, "It was all very interesting but we didn't think much about it at the time. We were just kids fifteen or sixteen years old, except for Uncle Luke Besaw, an old Frenchman who worked up there for years."

Sometimes they went down to the school in East Otis and took pictures of the teacher and pupils. Perl Rote, who lives on Reservoir Road in East Otis, up by the dam, remembers that when he was a school boy Mr. Lincoln came down with an open touring car and took the whole school up to spend the day at the Farm. He used them in a movie and fed them lunch. Perl thinks he was seven or eight years old at the time. He says they had a Christmas scene for an old fashioned school, and they took all the school children out there that one day to do a school scene in a log cabin built for the occasion. Stanley Cowell, who now lives in Cummington, says the open touring car was Stevens-Duryea and it held all fifteen of them. He thinks the movie was "Riders of the Purple Sage". Eloise McManus of Otis remembers just the Christmas tree scene she was in and that the toys on the tree were distributed and she got a doll to bring home.

Another old timer is Ralph Worden of Monterey who also grew up in East Otis. He says, "I just remember a few little things. I went up there one time when I was a youngster. I was eleven or twelve and a whole bunch of us went up that day because we knew they were shooting a picture. I remember my uncle and aunt was there and probably my mother. I don't remember what the name of the picture was. This girl on a black horse was riding down the road, and the producer or whatever you might call him yelled at her, 'The next time you come down let



View From Drive

him out!!' In other words, run it. I can still see her coming on that horse while they were cranking the camera. Boy, she come down that road lickety split the second time. I don't know who she was, nobody from around here. She was supposedly a professional actress. And that Christmas scene — Eloise McManus who runs the store in Otis, she may have been in that Christmas scene. I know my nephew came home with a train they gave him off the tree. Seems to me they got \$5 or something and he got the train and some of the girls got dolls. That was probably about 1917."

Ralph continues, "Billy Snow was superintendent up there at the Farm. They used to have a lot of horses and cut logs up there. Joe Tacy, Charlie Foster, William Hall, and Charlie Babb worked there. They all did general maintenance work. Another fella that worked up there was old Luke Besaw, an old French fella. I know that one time they went down and took a picture of the falls in East Otis. Well, there's some falls just below the dam at the reservoir. Now I didn't see this, but I heard them telling about the time the actor ran down to the edge and was supposed to jump. But they threw a dummy

over and took the picture of the dummy as it was falling. The name of the production company was Grey Seal, a name like Metro-Goldwyn Mayer. Maybe that was Lincoln's company. I was only in there that once watching the acting and I never worked up there. I remember other things that went on up there because my brother-in-law, Joe Tacy, worked up there and he would come home and tell us things. You see very few Blandford people knew what was going on, which is not surprising because it was closer to East Otis in the first place and is tucked way in there off the highway. In those days it would be quite a ways to travel from Blandford, you know.

"I bought a pony up at the Farm about 1917 and that pony was ridden by Johnny McCracken, the actor. He was an actor they employed to come and act in that picture 'Desert Gold'. Anyway, when I went up to get the pony Billy Snow and I had an awful time getting the saddle on. Guess she hadn't been ridden in a long time. I rode her down to East Otis and put her in my uncle's barn, where Leon Cowell lives. The next morning I was going to ride her down to where my father was, but she'd only go as far as the bridge

in East Otis and there she stopped, turned around and went back up. I sold her the next day to Frank Bean who ran the East Otis hotel. I was a youngster, you know, and I got her cheap; didn't pay much for her because I didn't have much money. I don't think I paid over \$15 or \$20.00. I know that the picture 'Desert Gold' was taken down in Chester in the summer time. I remember my brother-in-law coming home and saying we had to take three or four pair of horses and take the stuff down to Chester, bring them back, go here and go there. 'Desert Gold' was shown in Pittsfield so I was told, and there was a book by the same name. I didn't see the movie, but of course when they take these pictures the places don't even look the same unless you're well acquainted with them. They made a picture here in Great Barrington recently and I went to see it. You wouldn't have known it was Great Barrington hardly.

"Well, I never saw Mrs. Van Heusen, but she had a son who went roaring around in the car, a National it was called. There used to be two bridges in East Otis, and after you turn and go by Ida's and take your left there was another bridge made of boards and loose stuff. When Bud Van

Heusen came across that bridge all the people in East Otis used to grab their kids and run into the house 'cause they knew it was Bud coming. I can remember seeing him in that car just once when the car was standing still in front of the store. The story was they bought this very expensive bull. I don't know how long they had it, but somewhere along the line Bud bought a rifle. He wanted to see how good he could shoot and he shot the damn bull and killed it. These are stories now, of course. Then they had a pretty good sized boat on Long Pond, which was on the property, and he sunk that. I remember the time my brother-in-law came home and told some fantastic story about Bud. 'If he was my son I'd kill him,' he'd say. Of course the farm up there has changed so much. There used to be much more open fields, although Mr. Peck opened some as I remember. My dad worked there when Uhl owned it. I heard my dad tell about this man Rand Gladden, he was one of the ones who used to hew beams out in the woods before they were sawed, and then bored the holes. When they got ready to put them up my dad used to say he never missed anything. Everything just fit and they could put in the pegs. There's

General View of Farm Buildings



still a lot of his buildings up there.”

Mrs. Harry Humason who lived out at the Farm in the thirties and early forties remembers seeing Mr. Lincoln, a handsome man, walking around the farm quite often. Bud Van Heusen later had a family and lived up there in one of the houses. Mrs. Humason says there were show dogs there in the summer as long as the Lincoln's owned the place. The Lincoln's chauffeur also cared for the dogs and drove them to shows.

Charles Humason of Otis remembers riding to Boston and New York when the chauffeur would drive the dogs to shows. Charles was about twelve years old at the time. He, and his sister Ida Hall, and her son Arnold, aged seven or eight, all went along for the ride. It was quite a thrilling experience for these boys from East Otis to stay overnight in a Boston or New York hotel. Charles says the Lincoln Farm was considered quite a place when he was growing up. About half the men in East Otis worked there and four of them boarded with the Humason family.

According to Mrs. John Simpson, a daughter of L.O. Peck, Uhl definitely had some connection with the Singer Sewing Machine Company. That was the source of his money. Edward Lincoln was a breeder of fine cropped-tail show horses. She remembers one very elegant carriage, used with the coach horses, which had won prizes at horse shows for its beauty and fine construction. When her family took possession of the Lincoln Farm in 1940 all the paraphernalia of these earlier ventures was stored in barns and sheds. She was fascinated by the trappings of by-gone days. There were sleighs, wagons, stage-coaches, and surreys. There were rooms

filled with saddles, uniforms, old muskets, and all sorts of things used in filming movies. There were wooden safes and other wooden items, and props made of papier-mache' and other flimsy materials. It seems that when the actors were pretending to move heavy objects, for instance robbers escaping with safes and other loot, they were not really straining their muscles!

Mrs. Thelma Humason, Otis librarian, went up to the Farm in the early thirties once or twice before she was married, when Harry Humason was farm manager. Not all the houses were lived in then and one house was just full of old costumes.

Contents of houses and farm buildings, anything of value, were sold at auction in 1963. Before the auction a man from a museum in Rhode Island came and bought many of the old wagons, coaches, and carriages to place on exhibit!

Long Pond can no longer be used for boating, swimming, or fishing. It was taken as a water supply for the Town of Blandford when location of the Massachusetts Turnpike ended use of the old Blandford reservoir.

It is still rumored here that Edward K. Lincoln was the first Tarzan of the Apes, an inaccuracy. The first Tarzan was Elmo Lincoln. As for Shirley Temple — “The Littlest Rebel” was filmed in the early nineteen thirties. It is at least possible that some of the scenery was shot at the Lincoln Farm. It seems unlikely that she ever came here and no-one seems to claim that she did. There is no record in Hollywood film archives linking that movie and the Lincolns. But does it really matter? The Lincoln Farm has had a wonderful history as it is.

Mrs. John I. Simpson of Longmeadow, Mass. very kindly loaned the brochure from which the farm description was quoted and the photographs of the Lincoln Farm copied.

Horace Bartlett 1845-1925, of "The Spruces"

(one of Worthington's Historic Houses)

With Something of His Predecessors and Progeny

The Rev. Mr. Huntington once said, "If I have some work to have done, I always go to the busiest man in the town — Horace Bartlett." The minister knew him well. He was a deacon of the church for twenty-nine years. His good tenor voice was heard in the choir. He knew his Bible from cover to cover. When the church burned, he helped raise money for a new building, and promptly pledged fifty dollars, which he probably did not have on hand, but he was confident he could earn it, for his ways of making money were many and varied.

He was a farmer on thirty acres of pasture and mowing that he added to "The Spruces" (present home of the Ray Magargals) when he moved his family there in 1882; but with milk bringing three cents a quart at "the creamery," farming barely yielded a living. He found other work, including road work, bridge-building, driving the stage, cutting out ice, and transplanting fir trees. (He was famous for his success in making them grow.)

He set up basket-making in a part of the house, with John Kinne as his partner the first year. At one time sixteen men were employed. One outlet was in Gloversville, where gloves were taken as payment and brought back to be sold in Worthington.

"The Spruces," once part of a tobacco barn, then a creamery, then a basket factory, became later, when the family home, a summer boarding house for city

guests. Surely credit for this addition to family income should go chiefly to Horace's wife, Caroline. Her daughters remember that she would arise at four o'clock to get her baking done, or do a big laundry by hand, before getting breakfast for the family and farm helpers by six o'clock and for twenty boarders by eight.

Horace loved to buy and sell property. He bought in all, seven places in Worthington, and sold all but the home place. In the Northampton Registry of Deeds, there are thirty-three recordings of his transfers of deeds. His wife once chided him: "You sell everything you own. I should think you would sell us." He replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "Once in a while a man gets something so darn poor he can't get rid of it."

His wit, as well as his appreciation of his wife, can also be seen in his reply to a summer neighbor who complained because she couldn't find a man to work for her. She thought "the Worthington women are wonderful, but the men are a poor lot." Horace told her, "They must have been middling smart to get such wonderful women for wives."

The Bartletts have a complete genealogical record tracing their family back to Robert Bartlett who came to Plymouth on the *Ann* in 1623. He married Mary Warren, daughter of Richard Warren, who had arrived on the *Mayflower*.

In 1795, Edward Bartlett, Jr. (1774-1849), who was born in Stoughton,

Massachusetts, and his wife, Mary Farr of Cummington, came to Worthington and set up their home on Cold Street. His generation was the sixth in this country. Of their seven children it was their son, Tilson, whose wife was Permelia Tower of Cummington, who was the father of Horace (and of eight other children who lived to adulthood). Horace and his wife, Caroline Eliza Graves of Whately, were

the parents of Elsie, the family and town historian, Irving, Guy, Marian, and Alice (who is now at "The Spruces").

At one time there were eleven families of Bartletts living in Worthington. Now there are four, with some of their children and grandchildren, all descendants of Guy: Robert T., George, Helen (Magargal), and Horace F. (Bevo).

(Adapted by Elizabeth Payne of the Worthington Historical Society from a tribute to Horace Bartlett written by his daughter, Elsie.)

Reflections

by Madeline Hunter

*The lake puffed its wave bellies
Like my grandmother's satin comforter.
I would wrap myself
In its undulating softness
Impervious to any threat.
Her globed light
Would reflect and shimmer
Puddle-patterns in the satin
Like the sunlight
Glints and flickers off the lake.
Tarnished leaves,
Satiated by sun and life,
Play tag with the wind
Casting whisper ripples on the water,
In moments of reflection
I find myself
More of a child
In awe.*

Stained Glass

by Glenda Laubach

Are there any of us who cannot remember the pure joy of suddenly turning a corner and being confronted with a beautiful stained glass window, with the sun's rays shining through it to make it a breathtaking burst of color before our eyes? Many have appreciated such a sight, but few have ever stopped to consider the craftsman responsible for the work or the amount of work entailed in creating such an awe-in-spiring work of art.

The history of stained glass goes back many, many years. Leaded glass windows have been traced as far back as the ninth and tenth centuries. Throughout the years, there have been many craftsmen who have gone unrecognized and unnoticed, but who have given their lives and their talents to the creation of stained glass works of art throughout the world. In this country, the craft suffered especially after World War II, when economy became the keynote. Where once a doorway to a new home would have been beautifully adorned with stained glass, suddenly a plain wooden took its place. The creation of stained glass windows and objects became even more of a "lost" art.

With the revival of crafts in the sixties, there came a renewed interest in stained glass and a new wave of talented craftspeople to carry on this old and honored craft. New ideas and designs began to surface and suddenly, stained glass found its way into the lives and homes of the people again.

In our area, we are fortunate to have two young and very talented stained glass artists, Ed and Joan Kimball, who live with their two children on Route 112 in Cummington. The Kimball Stained Glass Studio is presently in their home, but a new showroom should be completed by fall of 1978 to display their unique works of art. The area around their house is rustic and wooded. A brook flows behind their house and geese roam freely. The Kimballs, both natives of Brooklyn, New York, have found that this setting has given them much of the inspiration for their original designs.

Using a combination of stained glass and mirror, the Kimballs create a lovely assortment of hanging mirrors, hand mirrors, and pocket mirrors. Joan admits, "Most of our designs come from nature," and one finds trees and flowers adorning many of the mirrors which Joan classifies as basically an art nouveau type of design. Many of their mirrors are bordered in opalescent glass and feature a simple flower in a contrasting shade on one side, with its stem and leaves gently curving toward the bottom. Because of their simple and graceful lines, "our mirrors fit into everybody's home," says Joan.

The Kimballs have ventured into other areas as well. One of the most challenging was a series of stained glass windows at The Flaming Pit, a restaurant in Eastfield Mall in Springfield. The work was complicated and intricate. "One of the

windows took me about two weeks, working every day,” Ed admitted. “It was really a project.” The Kimballs have also worked stained glass panels into the headboard and footboard of a black walnut bed for a customer. “Stained glass,” says Ed, “can be used in china cabinets, medicine cabinets, and many such things.”

In the future, Ed and Joan hope they can continue to create original designs. They would like to experiment with combining glass with other crafts such as wood, leather, and pottery. They also hope to do more custom designing of windows and stained glass panels for private homes and businesses. According to Ed, “It seems like there would be no end to it.”

At present, however, their lives are busy. They sell their mirrors to several retail outlets and mail order catalogues. Locally, their mirrors are sold at Albert Steiger’s. Although it is helpful to sell to gift shops, the Kimballs have found that the pressure of having to produce set numbers of items takes away from the time they would like to spend creating and experimenting with new designs. They have also found that with the high cost of materials, the hours of work, and the various middlemen involved in retail-selling, the financial rewards are not that great.

Numerous craft shows throughout the area provided Ed and Joan with satisfaction — both financial and personal. “We do about ten shows a year, and they start in May and go right to Christmas,” says Ed. They enjoy the camaraderie of the other craftsmen and they feel that a valuable part of attending a show is learning from other craftspeople. There is a constant sharing of ideas. It is at the shows also that they get to see first hand the reactions of the people to their craft. “If they like it, it’s great,” Ed says, “and if they don’t like it, they just don’t buy it!”

Both Joan and Ed agree, though, it doesn’t matter whether people buy or not. If they appreciate what they see, then they react, and this is what gives the Kimballs their most satisfaction. Ed admits, “You do work for those ‘oohs’ and ‘ahhs’.”

And the Kimballs do work hard. They periodically go to New York City on buying-trips for glass. They choose what they want from a large warehouse near the docks. Here, glass is brought in from many parts of the world. According to Ed, though, it is not terribly important where the glass comes from. “We buy our glass according to the colors. If we like it, we buy it.” Each sheet of glass is different from the rest — each has its own hue and shading and the Kimballs have found it very difficult to match colors in one sheet to another. They have recently discovered a talented glassblower in Kent, Connecticut, and plan to use much of his glass in the future.

After the glass has been selected, the “cutting” process begins. According to Joan Kimball, however. “You don’t ‘cut’ glass. Glass is a liquid in a super frozen state and what you do is score the surface, setting up a line on which you create a fracture. You then put pressure on the score from underneath and snap the two pieces apart.” Ed says, “It took a long time to be able to cut glass where you wanted it to break. Still, once in a while, we have a problem. The glass still wants to break where it wants to break and not where you want it to.”

After the glass pieces are cut to fit a pattern, each is wrapped on the edge with copper foil. The pieces are then put together with the mirror and a paste called “flux” is put on the copper to help the solder adhere better. Then a bead of solder is run over the copper edges and the joints become sealed. Following this are a number of cleaning procedures to make sure the glass is free of grease and

dirt. Copper sulphate is added to the copper to give the seams an antique appearance. All of this amounts to hours of painstaking work for the Kimballs but they love it, and are good at their craft.

How did it all begin? It began at Gateway High School. Seven years ago, Joan attended a few evening courses in stained glass, taught by math teacher, John Tucker. "He was a fantastic teacher," says Joan. "We wanted to make a window for our home, so I started and just kept going!" She eventually started showing her glass at a few shows and suddenly found herself quite busy. Her husband, Ed, who had been a carpenter for sixteen years, decided to help Joan and they have been working together for the past three years.

The Kimballs enjoy the lifestyle they have created for themselves. They find great freedom in having their work in their

home. Ed recently got an idea for a mirror one night around midnight. He immediately got up from bed and began working on the pattern. When morning came, he had the plans drawn for a beautiful mirror, of a tree design, with each leaf cut separately in mirrored glass. Ed says, "It really turned out to be a super mirror and I wanted to keep it. And I can't afford to keep it. I can't buy my own work — I've got to sell it."

In a world of mass-produced goods, ulcers, and general unhappiness, it is most refreshing to meet someone like Ed and Joan. They care about what they do and they are happy. "This is fun," Ed says. "When the weeks are there and you have no orders and no money coming in, you start to think, 'Maybe I'd better go out and get a job.' But while we're working at it and the money is coming in, and we can pay our bills, it's fun."

• • •



Littleville Fair

by Harriet Gilman

The site of the first Littleville Fair is now under water, a portion of Littleville Lake. As one fishes here it is hard to imagine the excitement and activity of that day, September 30, 1921, when the first Farm Bureau Fair in Hampden County was held in the Littleville Chapel (on the west side of the lake). An article in a 1921 issue of *The Hampden*, a publication of the Hampden County Extension Service, stated, "They had a real community get-together fair at Littleville Chapel and practically everyone from Littleville, North Chester and Chester Hill brought their best from the home, the garden, the orchard and the barn, and was on hand personally to help make the day one to be long remembered. There was a good attendance, also, of out-of-town people.

"The hall was filled with fine displays of vegetables, canned goods, fancy work and cookery, while in the sheds outside were the exhibits of cattle and poultry. The schools were closed for the day and a program of field sports was held for the young people."

It is said that due to a shortage of space inside the chapel, wagons were used outside to display goods. One of the fine features of that day was the exhibit by the one-room schools of Littleville, North Chester and Chester Hill, showing the best of their handwriting, numbers, stories, and drawings.

Yearly, the Fair continued here until 1926, when it was moved to the present location on Kinnebrook Road. The need for more space, congestion of cars and wagons in front of the chapel and difficulty of collecting admission in an unenclosed area prompted the move. It is remarkable that as many as 800 attended these early fairs!

The new building, located on the present site, was constructed largely from donated work and materials. Logs were cut locally and the shingles were of cedar. Mr. George Stanton of Huntington designed the building and gave the kitchen in memory of his wife, Nellie. At the new site began the horse and ox drawing. In those days the stoneboat was loaded for





A traffic problem at Littleville Fair, 1924

the pulling with stones of given weights. The first stoneboat was made in 1928, the bolts for it handmade and donated by George Alvord, the Huntington blacksmith. In 1929 it was voted to put up a building for cattle.

In early 1931 the first hall burned to the ground, but the undaunted members, by holding raisings, had a new hall ready for the Fair that same fall! The records show that in 1932 the Fair came out \$112.00 short, owing also \$65.00 for insurance. Thus began the yearly coon suppers to earn money. These were cooked and served by the members of the Fair. (Chicken was also served!) Herb Cady,

who ran the meat market in Huntington, kept the coons in his freezer and dishes were borrowed from Daughters of Isabella. In addition, the Fair began to run its own refreshment booth at the Fairs as well as Saturday night dances. After 1936 the hall was rented to the Grange for dances.

Upon reading the old secretaries' reports, one is impressed with the fact that the early Fairs were perpetuated by sheer determination! Bees were held to raise buildings, move small buildings to the site, cut and sell logs from the property to pay off debts, clean grounds, paint, repair roofs, build fences and bleachers and prepare judging rings. The bees were usually outings for the whole family, the ladies providing an important added incentive by preparing hot meals for the men.

Donations were generous. A \$25.00 Delco plant was paid for from the officers' pockets (probably to provide light for the coon suppers), produce was given for the served meals, and lumber, stoves, dishes, and trophies were given, not to mention all the hours of individual member's time performing the tasks and running the errands of a volunteer organization. Items given by local merchants for prizes were



Second fair building, 1936

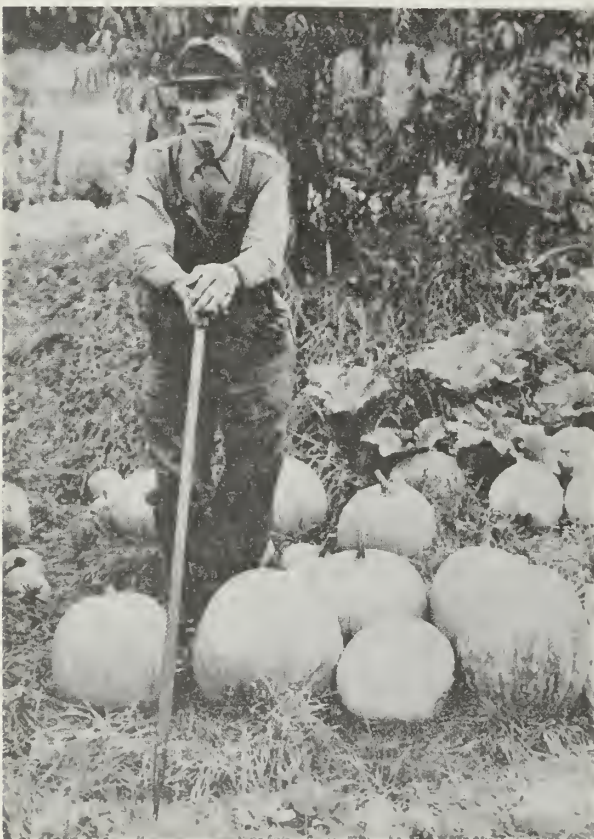
mentioned in a 1926 premium book — cord tire, windshield wiper, inner tube, bag of feed, tennis shoes (prize for 50 yard dash), flashlight, and gift certificates. The constable often volunteered his services. At one time 4-H youths from West Springfield came to work on the new dining hall. Raffles were held for everything including one for a pair of roller skates at 5¢ a chance in 1933. Today the use of tractors for drawing back and loading the stone-boat in the “pulling contest” is donated.

Over the years many interesting and novel events were sponsored to increase gate receipts. Did you ever hear of a potato picking contest or barnyard golf? One of the earliest events was a treasure hunt for the children from the three one-room schools. A playground ball was given to the school having the most participants.



Winthrop Brielman holds the head of his prize Guernsey, best animal in the fair, 1945.

Later a tug-of-war between four local fairs was held, all participants tugging at each fair and a trophy awarded at the end of the season. A horseshoe pitching contest, sponsored by the Grange, was conducted in the same manner. Other activities included wood-chopping and sawing, corn husking, coon dog trials, doll carriage parades, baby contests, gymkhana, trained oxen, pie eating and races of all kinds. In 1927, prizes were given for the person with the reddest hair and the most freckles.



Frank Cone, known for his vegetable displays and huge pumpkins. (1914)



Robert Olds with his team of eight-week old steers which are already well-broken to the yoke.



*Mr. and Mrs. Leon J. Kelso, Chester, first prize
for farm products.*

Certainly most of us would groan at the difficulty of working at Littleville Fair in the early years. Often there was no running water; cooking was done on black wood ranges until 1949; there were no electric lights until the Delco plant was installed in 1932, and no telephone on the grounds until 1954. (A story is told of a gentleman eating at one of the earlier poorly lighted suppers, who, thinking he had reached for a square of cheese for his apple pie, had a generous square of butter instead!)

In rereading old records and talking with those who remember the early Fair years, one gets the distinct feeling that these physical difficulties were not considered hardships and the fiscal shortages were not deemed poverty! The reward for the members who carried on with good courage, humor, and enthusiasm was the fulfillment they felt from seeing the success resulting from sacrifice, ingenuity, and neighborly cooperation.

Today the Fair continues, more streamlined, modern toilets replacing the old

one-holers, tractors working the stoneboat instead of ox teams with pulley blocks, and cement blocks being "pulled" on the boat instead of stones. Members and exhibitors are made up of interested folks from surrounding towns rather than local farmers, only. State aid is more generous. In its pastoral setting, it remains a very small, comparatively quiet Fair, where one can bring a picnic lunch and lounge in a lawn chair without getting run over. The river is even clean enough for a swim.

Several years ago the Fair date was changed from early October, the last of the local fairs, to the first weekend in August, the first of the local fairs. In October the people found the days too cold, but the produce plentiful. The weather is warmer in August, but the produce is scarce for exhibits. The problems still persist, struggle to survive continues, but when Cattle Show time at Littleville Fair rolls round, native sons and daughters return to find still enough of the old to tug at their heart strings.

• • •

The Abandoned Road

by William S. Mills

*Onward, over height and hollow,
Leading where there's none to follow;
Winding down through gorges deep,
Flanked by rill and sylvan steep.*

*Moss-gray walls in wild decay,
Lone and silent, guide my way;
Sunflecked vistas charm the sights,
Nature lovers' pure delights.*

*Gateway long untrod, concealed,
Portal once to golden field.
Here, where love its pledges gave
Home unwept has left its grave.*

*Though their pilgrimages done;
Journeys ended, havens won,
Where fond souls expectant met,
Here I fain would linger yet.*

*What its import none can tell,
Other hearts still feel the spell;
Hope and joy and peace sublime,
O'er and o'er to end of time.*

Chester, August 1909
in *Chester Folks*, the Founders of the Town,
Their Ancestors and Descendants.
Page 149 or original handwritten copy given to the
Hamilton Memorial Library by Mr. Mills.



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

Hilltown Farms

For Sale - in 1894

by Barbara Brainerd

In November, 1891, the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture published *A Descriptive Catalogue of Farms in Massachusetts Abandoned or Partially Abandoned*. This was a list of properties in the state which were for sale at prices which today seem unbelievably low. Apparently these prices were considered reasonable at that time, also, because so many abandoned farms were sold that the Board of Agriculture printed similar catalogues for several successive years. William R. Sessions, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, stated in the 1894 issue: "The object of the...publications...is to attract attention to the farms...and to show the small sum necessary to procure a rural home, where the advantages of New England schools, churches and home markets can be enjoyed." Mr. Sessions went on to devote several pages to explaining the reasons for the large number of farm properties throughout the state which had been abandoned. He said that "...Massachu-

setts is a commercial and manufacturing State. The census shows that only about four per cent (including both males and females) of the people follow agricultueal pursuits. The great majority are following other callings; and...it is not surprising that the enterprising young men of the rural districts are attracted from agriculture."

The 1894 catalogue offers one hundred thirty-six pages of Massachusetts farm properties for sale, listed by counties. We have assembled a few of these listings from our hill towns. The property in Granville is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Duris. The picture shows this property as it appears today.

We wonder if our readers can identify any of the other farms listed here from the descriptions which are given. We would welcome hearing from you. Drop us a line at:

Stone Walls

Box 85

Huntington, Mass. 01050

CUMMINGTON

Farm of 200 acres: mowing, 75; pasture, 75; woodland, 50; suitable for cultivation, 50. Almost all the grass can be cut with a machine. Sugar bush, 200 trees. Very large house, but in no condition to live in. Very large barn in good condition; barn cellar. Mostly fenced with stone wall, in good condition. Good water supply. One hundred and thirty-three young apple trees. Fine spruce and hemlock timber suitable for building purposes. Railroad station, Hinsdale, 7 miles; post-office, East Windsor, 1½ miles. Price, \$1,200, all in cash. Address, Melissa C. Dawes, Cummington, Mass.



GRANVILLE

Farm of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre: large garden suitable for cultivation. A large double house with two Ls; 10 rooms in one and 6 in the other; good repair. Well in house. Twelve apple and 2 peach trees and grape vine. In the centre of the village. Have 10 acres of land, part wood and part mowing, a little way out of the village, to sell cheap. Railroad station, Westfield, 12 miles; post-office, West Granville, 10 rods. Price, \$500; cash at sale, \$300; interest on balance, 5 per cent. Address Gilbert M. Miller, West Granville, Mass.

WORTHINGTON

Farm of 230 acres: mowing, 45; pasture, 125; woodland, 60; suitable for cultivation, 40. Nearly all of the grass can be cut with a machine. Sugar bush, 800 to 1,000 trees. No buildings. Good cellar to build on at both house and barn. Stone wall and rail and brush fence in fair condition. Running water from good spring through iron pipes. Quite a large orchard, including early, medium, late and winter fruit, with some pears and plums. Railroad station, Huntington, 12 miles; post-office, Worthington, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; mail received daily at store $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distant. Price, \$1,200; cash at sale, \$500; interest on balance, 5 percent. Address, Abbie W. Stewart, 167 Spring Street, Springfield, Mass.
(Sold 1893)

CHESTER

Farm of 85 acres: mowing, 25; pasture, 55 to 60; suitable for cultivation, 20. Grass can be cut with a machine. No buildings. Stone wall in good condition. Well watered by springs. Remains of an old apple orchard and a few other old fruit trees. Railroad station, Chester Depot, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles; post-office, Chester Centre, 2 miles. School within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. Price, \$500; cash at sale, \$125; interest on balance, 6 per cent. Address, Wm B. Taylor, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

TOLLAND

*Farm of 175 acres: mowing, 30; pasture, 30; woodland, 115; suitable for cultivation, 25. Two-thirds of the grass can be cut with a machine. Sugar bush, 2,500 trees, 600 tubs and sugar pan. House, 25x30; L. 25x30; 10 rooms; not in very good repair. Barn, 25x36; horse barn and woodshed, 25x35; tolerable repair. Pole fences in good condition. Well near the house. Fifty apple and a few plum trees. Railroad station, Becket, 13 miles; post-office, Tolland, 2½ miles. Price, \$750; cash at sale, \$350; interest on balance, 6 per cent. If more land is wanted will sell the place adjoining on the north for \$500. Address, Chas. N. Marshall, Tolland, Mass.

BECKET

Farm of 330 acres: mowing, 32 to 35; pasture, 100; woodland, 195; suitable for cultivation, 25. One-half of the grass can be cut with a machine. House 24x26; wood shed, 12x15; 9 rooms; fair repair. Barn, 30x40, with shed and wagon-house; barn, 26x36; very good repair. Stone wall and rail and pole fence. Well at house and barn, good springs in the pastures. Fruit enough for family use. Probably 1,000 cords of young wood on the farm, one-half or more fit to cut. School, 1¼ miles distant. Railroad station, Becket, 4½ miles; post-office, Becket, 4½ miles. Price, \$700; cash at sale, \$350; interest on balance, 6 per cent. Address, C.B. Ferry, Becket, Mass.

(Sold 1894)

OTIS

*Farm of 150 acres; Mowing, 30; pasture, 40; woodland, 65; suitable for cultivation, 15. Most of the grass can be cut with a machine. Sugar bush, 300 trees. House, 24x30; L, 16x30; 6 rooms; not very good repair. Two barns, each 26x36, comfortable repair. Mostly pole fence in very good condition. Good well. Thirty-five apple trees. Railroad station, Russell, 14 miles; post-office, Otis, 5 miles. Price, \$800; cash at sale, \$400; interest on balance, 5 per cent. There is timber enough, mostly pine, on the farm to pay for the place. Address, Marshall Miller, Tolland, Mass.

BLANDFORD

Farm of 280 acres: mowing, 80; pasture, 60 to 80; woodland, 120 to 140, at least thirty years' growth; suitable for cultivation, 40. Most of the grass can be cut with a machine. Sugar bush, 300 to 400 trees. No buildings. Brush and pole fence and some stone wall. Well and good spring. Fifty apple trees. Railroad station, Chester, 5 to 6 miles; post-office, North Blandford, 4 miles. Price, \$1,200 to \$1,500. Address, H.L. Smith, Chester, Mass.

(Sold 1892)

*Not certified to.

The Kaolin Mine in Blandford, Massachusetts

Related by Percy A. Wyman

KAOLIN: a secondary mineral, derived from fresh aluminum silicates in soil. Crystals: fine-grained and in compact masses with individuals usually indistinguishable. Kaolin forms dull earthy masses, or pseudomorphs after feldspar. Kaolin is widely used in ceramics.

In China there is a high ridge which natives call "Kaoling", meaning high hill. A pure white clay from which the Chinese make porcelain comes from this ridge, and is called "Kaolin" from the name of the hill. Unlike many clays, kaolin becomes white when it is baked in the kiln.

The kaolin mine, or pit, in Blandford was located off Main Street opposite the entrance to the present Kaolin Road. It was probably opened sometime after the Civil War. I remember that my father took me there when I was about six years old, which would have been in 1894, and at that age a boy doesn't see things beyond his own interests. It seemed to be about thirty feet deep and many men were digging a deep ditch to drain off the water which seeped in. The ditch had been dug as far down hill as South Street by then, and was about fifteen feet deep at the pit end. A pump was used to lift the water into the ditch. It was probably a pulsometer as these were used until 1929. After that, gasoline pumps came into use. It was a prime factor to keep the water below the level of work, and it was said that about one hundred men were employed there.

These men were mostly Hungarians and they lived in a building nearly 100 feet long. I remember looking in the window and being amazed to see no partitions in the long room.

Down in the pit, the floor, where about fifty men were piling clay, was dry. I could see that the clay was a beautiful cream color and soft enough to be lifted on round-ended shovels. It held its shape when piled in a heap in the center of the pit which was about forty feet in length. A stiff-legged derrick was a steam hoisting engine and three drums and cables was used to lift the kaolin from the pit and onto the wagons to be taken to Russell to the Blandford Brick and Tile Company's factory. The derrick was similar to those used on ships and wharfs when loading and unloading. They used a scale box, which held one square yard, to lift one load of the kaolin from the pit and let it fall into the wagon. Now, perhaps you've never seen nor known what a scale box is. It is made like a large scoop shovel without a handle and is about five feet wide and seven or eight feet long. The sides and one end are about fifteen inches high. The front side is rounded. A flat piece of steel about three inches wide and three quarters of an inch thick and is riveted to the top

edge to add strength. The box itself is made of sheet iron about a quarter of an inch thick. The back corners are rounded and, of course, all sides are riveted together. On each side, about one third of the way from the back, is a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch hole through the pan and the three-inch rim on top, with a four-inch ring in these. There are $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chains that come from a ring where the chains come together about five feet above the scoop, and a third chain with a toggle hook. When the scoop is full this third chain is hitched into a single ring in front. When the loaded scale box is raised and over the wagon box, the small ring that holds the toggle chain is tapped free and the load slices out.

Each man, it seems, had a job to do as

they loaded the wagons and the teams moved out and down the Kaolin Road to the Russell Road and on to Russell. I used to count them as they passed the Second Division School when I was in the first grade there. There were twelve to fourteen wagons and they made two trips a day.

I used to think that the pit was shut down because of the water level, but now I think it was because the clay ran out. About the year 1900, two little girls were standing on the western side of the pit; the ground gave way, and one, Laura DeBraul, was drowned. After this tragedy, the pit was filled in as well as the drainage ditch. Thus the land today appears much as it did before the Kaolin pit was operated.

• • •

Recollections of Mrs. Josephine Sheffield Porter

by Percy A. Wyman

Mrs. Porter was a grand old lady of a long ago day,
One of the first to buy a summer home up North Street way,
She had the library built before I was born, I hear,
And left an endowment to keep it for many a year.
I remember each summer I saw her drive through
In her Calash, with her coachmen and matched pair, too.

In my memory I see her as she was years ago
She appeared to be short and quite plump also.
She wore a black dress of silk all trimmed with lace
And a little black cap covered her hair, not her face.
She carried a parasol to keep off the sun
And visited my mother while driving around.

Every year she would tie up a bundle of clothes
And visit the folks who had need of those.
She knew our large family with children galore
And that Mother made over clothing used once before.
She would leave coats and dresses like new to us still
And for other needs, a ten dollar bill.

Mother once, I remember, made a beautiful dress
And trimmed it with lace; she looked well in this.
There were dresses for the girls and pants for each boy;
Mrs. Porter's clothes were always made over with joy.
One year we missed her; never more would she come,
I assume God Almighty had welcomed her home.

Now I'll go back to the library of Mrs. Porter's fame
She was the one to have it built; it carries her name.
Of course it's a monument to Blandford's men who toil
Made it of bricks and each brick from Blandford's soil;
Taken from the pit of Kaolin which was an industrious scene,
For the Blandford Brick and Tile Company in Russell, it had been.

They once said, so I've heard, of all the clay they found,
There was no other like it taken from the ground,
It was a creamy yellow when they dug it, I recall,
For seeing is believing and I've seen it all.
Father took me there when I was six or so
And I remember how the men were digging down below.

I attended the Second Division School in 1896, I'd say
And remember seeing the many loads that passed by each day,
Carried on special wagons so that the three by fours so stout
Which made up the bottom, could be lifted up and out
By two men to unload them from the center of the cart
And the clay would fall beneath in bins as the floor boards came apart.

I want you to remember as you pass your library there
That the clay of which those bricks were made was dug with care,
From deep down in a pit and loaded into scale boxes by hand;
Then lifted by a derrick when given the command.
The derrick stood outside the hole where the loading was done
Using a steam engine to run cables to raise and lower the boom.

North Blandford's church foundation walls are yellow brick you'll find,
Any many buildings in our state have used this uncommon kind
Perhaps many of the folks who live in Blandford town today
Have never heard about the mine and its cream-colored clay
For the younger generation always look for something new
And are not always interested in what people used to do.



Blandford Free Library

W.J. PEEBLE'S SERIES

Contributed by Doris W. Hayden

Mrs. Josephine Porter was a summer resident of Blandford who, in the late eighties of the last century, bought the house on North Street now owned by the Blandford Country Club. She was born Josephine Earl Sheffield, daughter of Joseph Earl Sheffield of New Haven. He was prominent in the business world and noted for his large gifts to educational institutions, among which was the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, with which Mrs. Porter's husband, John Addison Porter, was connected. Her older son, John Addison Porter Jr., was private secretary to President McKinley.

Blandford is indebted to her for its library building and many of the original books on its shelves. When Mrs. Porter first came to Blandford there was no public library, and she brought from her New Haven home several hundred books which she loaned to both residents and summer visitors. The residents took them home by the armful before winter, in anticipation of snowbound days. But sometimes returning later to exchange them when entrance was made by climb-

ing the drifts over the porch railing, and later thawing chilled fingers at the house next door, now Mountain View. The books were so eagerly borrowed that Mrs. Porter and her younger son, Edgar Sheffield Porter, decided to give a building to the town for a permanent library. Mrs. Porter purchased the land and assumed the complete cost of erecting the library building, which is built of fireproof buff-colored brick made in Russell from kaolin mined in Blandford.

For a number of years she regularly donated many worthwhile books. She also established a two thousand dollar trust fund, the income of which is still used to purchase books for the Porter Memorial Library, named in honor of her son, Edgar, who died before the building was completed. Mrs. Porter was also a generous benefactor of the church in Blandford and there is a plaque inside the chapel so stating.

(This article is based on material written by Frances E.T. deBraal in 1940 when she was librarian in Blandford.)

The Allen Account Books

by Bernard Drew

The Windsor Historical Commission, through the generosity of Mrs. Marguerite Jordan of Dalton, is now the proud possessor of three account books and journals kept years ago by the Allen family of Windsor.

The Allens lived in the section of town called, appropriately enough, Allenville, in the northeast corner on River Road, where the Arnold and Seaman families now reside. Zebulon Allen operated a grist mill at the junction of Windsor Jambs Brook and the North Branch of the Westfield River. These account logs, covering roughly the years 1815-1865, paint a fascinating picture of small town trade in the 19th century.

The earliest book is a record of Zebulon Allen's grist mill business and farm produce sales. Typical entries are "half a bushel of oats .25" and "one pound butter .14" for which he was paid "cr. by your mare one day .33" or "cr. by your plow 1½ days .25" and so on.

Periodically, Allen and his various clients settled their accounts. For example, on April 10, 1821, "This day Reckoned and Settled all Book accounts with Jacob Lowden and to ballance found due to me o1.37." It is signed by Zebulon Allen and Jacob Lowden.

Once they knew where they stood with each other, they carried on business as usual. Lowden's debt was particularly low at this time. Occasionally, Allen owed credit to his neighbors.

This first journal is brimming with the names of many Allenville and Windsor

Bush residents. William Perry was probably the mill's single biggest client. Others include James Beels, Josiah Allen, Asher Holdridge, Brister Pirce, Wait Atwood, Pebody Bartlett, Stephen Hollis, Esry Ingraham, Mary Jinks, Ebenezer Whitman, and Seth Reed. All told, Allen did business with more than 50 individuals over an eight year span. He attracted farmers from East Windsor, Windsor Hill, Plainfield, West Cummington and Cummington — even though there were grist mills in those areas. He did work for Dr. Peter Bryant of Cummington, father of the well-known poet and journalist.

Zebulon Allen eventually passed along operation of the mill to his sons. When Hemen Allen kept the log book for the business, beginning about 1827, we see that the family has built a sawmill. Debts in this book are X'd out when paid. While some trade is still bartered, more cash exchanges hands in these entries.

The third book seems to be a personal account book of one of the Allens, covering the period 1860-1865. Typical transactions are: "Octr 17th 1860 Mr. Marsh finish'd my thrashing — 195 bushells 127 bushells of oats 42 bushells of buck wheat 26 bushells of wheet. Paid Mr. Marsh \$15, dollars for work." And on the same day, "Octr 17th 1860 Sent a fat Hog to Pittsfield weight 400 2½ lbs. — \$32.20." From this excerpt, with its curious manner of spelling and writing, we see a definite shift to cash exchange; Allen sold the pig to pay for the thrashing. Also, roads were obviously improving if

This purchase order, dated July 12, 1812, shows transactions at Zebulon Allen's grist mill and store carried out in English pounds. Most of his business was done by barter until the mid 19th century.

M^r Zebulon Allen

Bot of Ashley Nantistyne & Co. Boston

1812

July 12	2 W ^{ts} Latt	6'	£11-12- ¹¹
	4 " "	5'	1- ¹¹ - ¹¹
	81 ^u Nails	11	11-1- ¹¹
	4 ^u Fine Hyson Tea	5/6	5/6-2-0
	2 ^u Bohe	15/6	" 7- ¹¹
	7 y ³ Cakes	4/	1-8- ¹¹
	1 Hatt		" 12- ¹¹
	1 Skin Cotten 1/10 3 ^u Cakes	4/6 14/6	" 6-11
	1 ^u Maceless Snuff		" 6- ¹¹
	1 1/2 y ³ Muslin 3/6-5/3-14	Back D ^c 7/6	" 12-9-
	4 ^u Sugar		" 11- ¹¹
	Black Tea Dullies		4- ¹¹ - ¹¹
			£ 14-11 0

Sup^d on

By 3 bl 17 qts. Clarified	72/	£12-11-3
" 20 qts. Clarified	6/	- 3-9-
" 2 bl 24 qts. Hard Grasp	12/	1-13- ¹¹
		£ 14-11- ¹¹

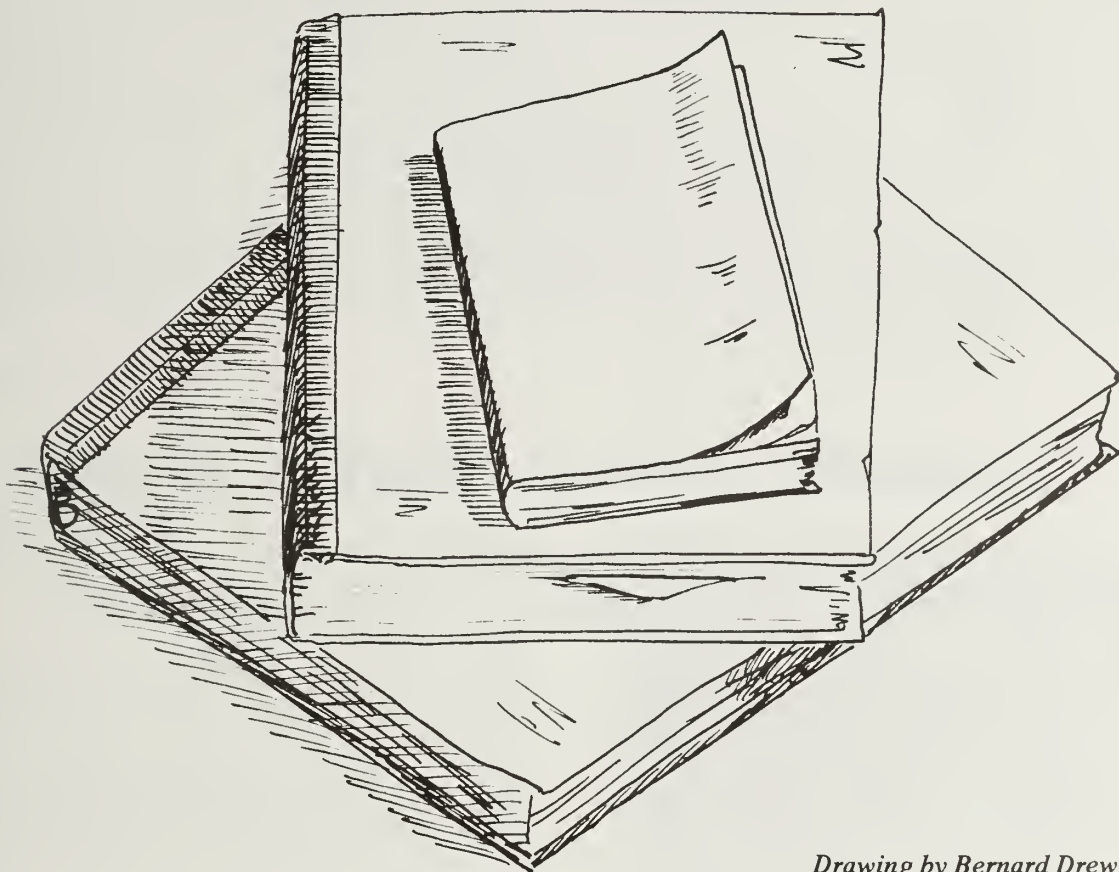
Errors Excepted Ashley Nantistyne & Co. Boston

he traveled all the way to Pittsfield — about 17 miles — to sell the animal.

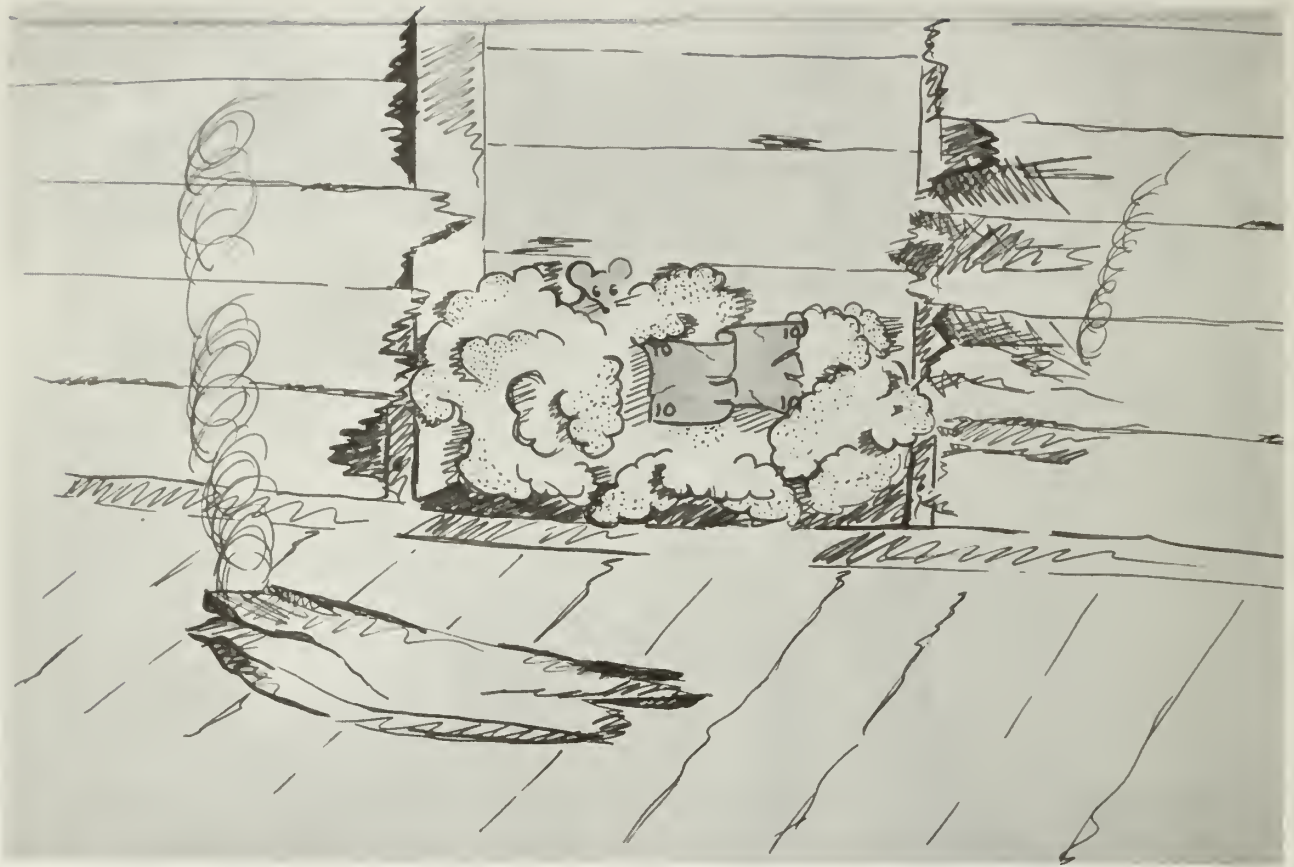
The last book also lists the expenses of building a house in 1860. The total comes to just over \$500 in cash outlay, with Allen doing most of his own labor.

The Allen Sawmill prospered for many years. In the 1876 *Beers Atlas of Berkshire*

County, the firm is listed as a manufacturer of dimension lumber of all kinds, both rough and dressed. “Lumber furnished to order at shortest notice. Also manufr of long shovel, hoe, broom and brush handles, corn & feed ground to order.”



Drawing by Bernard Drew



Drawing by Judy LeBeau

Treasure in a Rat's Nest

*by Barbara Brainerd
from information provided by Helena Duris*

It was March 25, 1871. Joe Welch, a boy who live with Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Phelon of Beech Hill in Granville, Massachusetts, was coming home from the orchard with a load of maple syrup. As he approached the house, he heard a commotion within it. Running to the kitchen door, he flung it open to discover Mrs. Phelon fighting a roaring fire behind the mantleframe. Joe pitched in without hesitation, grabbed a bar, and tore off the frame. Woman and boy worked frantically and soon had the fire under control. As they removed the rubbish left in the aftermath of the blaze,

they discovered a rat's nest. In the lining of the nest was a badly mutilated ten-dollar Treasury note! Mrs. Phelon, grateful to Joe for his timely and efficient assistance, presented him with the bill as a reward for saving the house from destruction.

Twenty-eight years later Joe still had the same Treasury note. By now he was Mr. Joseph Welch, selectman and owner of the village store in West Granville. On February 21, 1899, he deposited the old and tattered ten dollar bill, along with other more modern bills, in the First

National Bank of Westfield where Mr. Loring Lane was treasurer. The bill was such an oddity that it was sent to a Sub-Treasury, whence it was forwarded to Washington D.C. for examination by experts. It was finally decided that it was genuine and that it belonged to the series of 1815. This series had been authorized on February 24, 1815, to pay arrearage in the expenses of the War of 1812. The last note that had been received at the Treasury from this series was in 1842. Fifty-seven years had elapsed before the bill from the rat's nest appeared on the scene! No wonder people doubted its authenticity!

The ancient ten-dollar bill aroused a

great deal of interest in banking circles in the area. An article about it was printed in the *Westfield Sun*. Mr. Loring Lane, intrigued by the strange circumstances, contacted Joseph Welch to hear personally the story of the fire and the bit of treasure found in the rat's nest.

The house which yielded up this unusual piece of currency is still standing and appears in the photograph below. Austin Phelon, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Phelon, lived in this house until he died at the age of one hundred years. Walter Phelon and Miss Edith Phelon, son and daughter of Austin, occupy the house today.

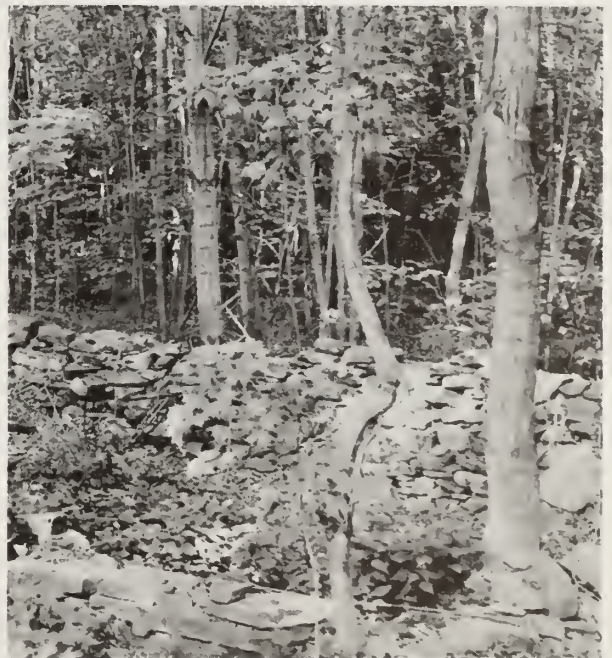
While writing this poem, I pictured myself walking along a sylvan path in early autumn, you know the kind of scene that Grant Wood painted. There's a stone wall on my left, bordering a mostly overgrown field. On my right, a little to the fore, lie the stone remains of an old farmhouse, built perhaps two hundred years ago.

Ol' Stone Day

by Kevin Desabrais

*Settle me down an ol' stone day
along an ol' stone path,
Where ol' stone boys are wont to flirt
And ol' stone girls to laugh.*

*Where ol' stone men and women think
of how the die is cast;
And ol' stone folks forget their lives,
At long an ol' stone, ol' stone last.*



Letters from our Readers

March 20, 1978

Dear Mrs. Mason,

Thank you for writing me and sending the picture back also. I understand more about the *Stone Walls* now. Mrs. Bronson wanted to be sure I got that picture back so now I can tell her if she calls me.

I was born in Montgomery and my father came up to the farm from Westfield as a druggist and before long he was a real farmer and I remember him going around to neighbor farmers doing the butchering for them, both pigs and cattle. He peddled milk in Russell for many years and when he went from 5¢ to 6¢ a quart they didn't like it very much but had to pay 9¢ a quart after we moved out of town. He also cut ice on the river above the dam and sold ice for some time.

They didn't have milk bottles in those days as I recall. He took a quart measure in one hand and a ten quart can in the other and when he went to a house would pour out what anyone would want into a dish. In the winter he would use a double runner sled and, at first, my father had a milk wagon in the summer, but after awhile, bought a Ford station wagon to peddle milk with. My Uncle Sharon Williston bought one of the first Fords made with oil lamps on the side. It was on display some years back at Holcomb's show rooms in Westfield. Don't know if it's around now or not.

By the way, the farm we lived on was left by my grandfather Henry Holcomb to my mother. I guess that was why my folks moved there after they left Westfield where they were married. My father put in the first telephone all around Montgomery, Russell, Blandford, and Huntington. The telephone men stayed at our house and the poles they used came off our land. The chestnut trees grew nice and straight, most of them, and they would cut and haul them out, hew them, then my father would hitch the pair of horses to the express wagon, put on some poles and wire and shovels, and go for the day, putting in the poles and stringing the wire as they went.

When my folks first went to live in Montgomery they had to drive along the railroad tracks from Woronoco up and sometimes the horses got afraid of the trains. When we moved we drove the cattle in the roads. We started out after milking one night, drove to Russellville, put the herd in a barnyard over night, and the next day we drove them all the way to Enfield, Massachusetts, (around forty miles) through Holyoke to Northampton, Amherst, and Belchertown on to Enfield. I remember driving them right down through the center of Northampton about the middle of the day on Sunday — a herd of fifteen or twenty. It sure was a long walk and I guess the cattle were as tired as we were. They didn't always stay in the road and sometimes we had to go around them and get them back on the road. We had the bull tied to a wagon and the rest were supposed to follow. We drove sheep the same way. My father had a flock of about one hundred fifty at one time.

It has sure changed a lot since then. Those were the days when neighbors helped each other, when they had corn to put in and butchering and all. Our neighbor, George Clark, used to put a plow on a wood shod sled and break a track through after a snow storm with his pair of oxen up to our place and down from his farm towards Huntington.

If you would like to talk about some of the old stuff that went on up that way, I would like to tell you about it. . .

Respectfully yours,
Cecil H. Healey
West Springfield

You asked for comments. I can honestly say I read *Stone Walls* completely almost as soon as it arrives. Thoroughly enjoyable and very well done.

In the most recent issue — back cover quote from Milne's book. I chuckled, as Professor Lorus Milne taught my freshman biology course at U.N.H. several years ago!

Thanks for many refreshing articles — well worth your effort.

B. Langmore

3, 7, 78

Stone Walls
Huntington, Mass.

The stone wall photographs you reproduce are the vulgarized remains. It seems to me you should show the unphilfered, to show what masters those builders were in putting big stone on small stone on big flat, round: "Give me what you have, I'll train it in a wall that will stand forever regardless of the earth terrane."

There is a piece of stone wall on the steep roadside we pass that stands secure and is a masterful created abstraction. There are a varied many such in the stone walls of our hill country, and in the larger sluiceways, old abutments, etc. Some camera enthusiast should make a book of them for posterity.

Sincerely
Fred Nagler

To whoever left the issue of *Stone Walls* at my door on Emery Street while I was away, many thanks. As it was I was in Noble Hospital getting my "Blood tank refilled" in hopes I may have strength enough to at least partially clear out some of our next storm, if and when it may arrive. . .

I, along with many others in this area, sure miss our fine Doctor Huffmire. When he was still with us, I could go to his office and get the same treatment that I have to spend a week at Noble Hospital today.

I do hope someday someone can do justice to a good story about Dr. John Huffmire in one of your fine issues of *Stone Walls*.

Respectfully
Roy E.G. Turner

About Our Contributors

ELSIE BARTLETT lived in Worthington until her death.

BARBARA BRAINERD lived in Blandford for many years but now resides in Westfield.

KEVIN DESABRAIS grew up in Huntington and attended Gateway Regional School.

BERNARD DREW from Housatonic serves the editorial board well as illustrator, photographer, and writer.

HELENA DURIS is also a member of the editorial board as well as the curator of the Historical Museum in Granville.

HARRIET GILMAN lives on Chester Hill. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Kelso, founders of the Littleville Fair.

DORIS W. HAYDEN of Blandford is a valued contributor to the magazine from her extensive knowledge of local history.

MADELINE HUNTER teaches English at Gateway Middle School.

JUDY LEBEAU lives in Worthington.

GLENDA LAUBACH of Russell taught English at Gateway for awhile and is now a full time wife and mother.

LOUISE MASON lives on a sheep and Christmas Tree Farm in Russell.

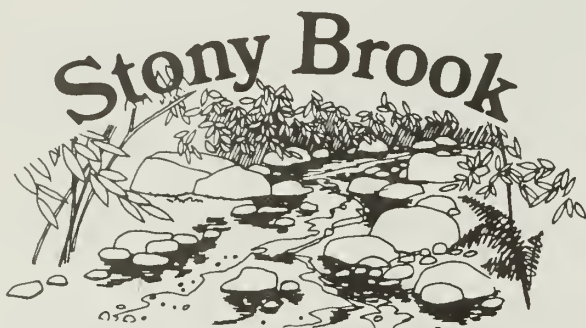
WILLIAM S. MILLS lived in Chester at the turn of the century.

ELIZABETH PAYNE is the secretary of the Worthington Historical Society.

PERCY WYMAN lived in Blandford most of his life, but now lives in Westfield.

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Spring and Fall are traditionally our two most active building seasons. If you wish to be in by Christmas, we suggest you contact us immediately.

As far as land sales are concerned, we have sold 75% of our listings in 1978 with sales totaling approximately \$100,000. We still need more land listings and ask you to consider us.

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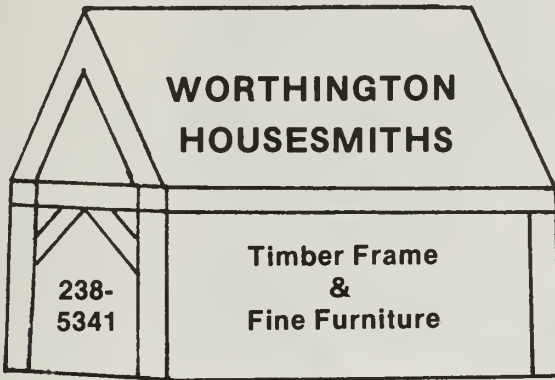
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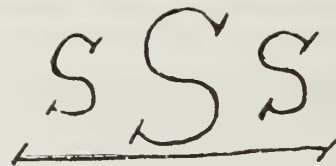
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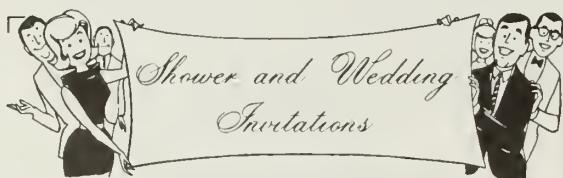
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— Howard S. Russell

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